



Southwark Schools Human Resources – Service Offer

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ABOUT THE SERVICE



- We are a highly experienced team with a strong track record of supporting education settings by providing clear, specialist advice to resolve HR challenges effectively.
- Our diverse team brings a wealth of expertise, perspectives, and personalities to suit different schools and contexts. We include legally trained professionals, individuals with teaching and school backgrounds, and experts who have successfully navigated complex HR and legal cases. Our expertise includes law, mediation, coaching, advisory services, and general HR. As part of the Education team, we understand that your priority is delivering the best outcomes for children. Our advice is always tailored to support positive school improvement.
- When staffing issues arise, we recognise the need for responsive, strategic guidance that helps you manage challenges with confidence.
- Our in-depth knowledge of Southwark policies and procedures sets us apart, ensuring we provide informed advice that aligns with your local context and passion for education.
- We collaborate with local authorities and key internal service areas including Education, Governance, Finance, Audit, and Investigations, to deliver a holistic approach to HR management.
- We work closely with the local authority's legal team and have extensive experience partnering with external legal providers.
- Our established relationships with national, regional, and local employer associations, trade unions, professional bodies, education networks, and school leaders enhance our ability to provide well-rounded support.
- We offer unlimited expert HR advice through multiple channels—telephone, email, virtual meetings, or in-person visits—whichever suits your needs best.
- Building strong, honest, and collaborative professional relationships is at the heart of what we do. We take the time to understand your school's unique context to provide individualised HR coaching and advise.
- To keep you informed, we write a fortnightly newsletter keeping you updated on key school HR updates and developments.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPALS

At Southwark Schools' Human Resources, we are committed to helping schools achieve their school improvement objectives by providing expert, tailored HR support. Our approach is built on the following key principles:

- **Child-Centred Approach** –Improving educational outcomes for children is at the centre of our HR advice, ensuring staffing matters are effectively managed to support a high-quality learning environment.
- **Legal Compliance & Best Practice** – We provide advice that fully complies with employment law, education legislation, safeguarding requirements, and statutory guidance. We also keep schools informed of legislative updates and HR best practices.
- **Fairness, Equity & Inclusion** – We are committed to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our work, ensuring that our advice is tailored to meet the unique needs of every school community.
- **Partnership & Collaboration** – We work proactively with school leaders, governors, trade unions, and external stakeholders to provide a holistic HR service that supports the smooth running of schools.
- **Confidentiality & Professionalism** – We handle all HR matters with discretion, sensitivity, and confidentiality, delivering impartial, well-informed advice that supports ethical decision-making.

- **Continuous Improvement** – We are committed to regularly reviewing and enhancing our services in response to feedback, policy changes, and evolving best practices, ensuring we provide the highest standard of HR advice and guidance.

OUR SERVICE OFFER

Our HR service delivers expert advice and guidance to assist schools in managing staff matters fairly, consistently, and in line with employment law and best practice. We aim to support schools in fostering a positive and productive working environment that enhances staff wellbeing and performance.

Employee Relations

Policy Development & Implementation

- Advising on and developing clear, robust policies including disciplinary procedures, grievances, capability, absence management, and staff conduct.
- Ensuring policies align with current employment law, school policies, and best practice guidance to promote fairness and consistency in staff management.

Disciplinary Matters

- Offering expert guidance on managing disciplinary issues in compliance with employment law, ensuring a fair and transparent process.
- Supporting schools throughout the disciplinary process, including investigation, hearings, and outcomes, to ensure all procedures are documented and conducted legally and equitably.
- Ensuring disciplinary action is appropriate, proportionate, and in line with the school's policies and statutory obligations.

Performance Management

- Supporting schools in addressing capability issues and underperformance fairly, consistently, and in accordance with employment law.
- Providing guidance on implementing both informal and formal interventions, including support plans, investigations, and hearings, to ensure the process is structured and supportive.

Grievance & Dispute Resolution

- Assisting in resolving workplace disputes through structured mediation, discussions, and formal grievance procedures.
- Ensuring concerns are handled fairly and efficiently to minimise disruption and maintain staff morale, while promoting a culture of open communication and trust.

Managing Absence & Wellbeing

- Providing strategies for effectively managing sickness absence, including return-to-work procedures, occupational health referrals, and reasonable adjustments where necessary.
- Promoting staff wellbeing initiatives, creating a supportive working environment that prioritises employee health and engagement.

Trade Union & Staff Engagement

- Collaborating with trade unions to foster positive relationships and ensure effective consultation on staffing matters.
- Supporting schools in employee engagement initiatives to enhance job satisfaction, retention, and the overall success of the school.

Employment Law & Case Management



- Providing expert advice and support if a dispute progresses to an employment tribunal. We guide schools through the Early Conciliation process with ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation, and Arbitration Service) to resolve matters amicably before they escalate further.
- Ensuring compliance with ACAS requirements and assisting in case preparation for tribunals, including liaising with legal advisers and mitigating legal risks and costs.

Safeguarding

Accredited Safer Recruitment in Education Training

- We provide accredited training in safer recruitment practices, endorsed by the Safer Recruitment Consortium. This training ensures your recruitment processes prioritise the safety, welfare, and wellbeing of children at all times.

Advice on Allegations Against Staff

- We offer expert guidance on managing safeguarding matters, particularly allegations against staff, ensuring compliance with statutory safeguarding requirements and best practice.
- Our support ensures allegations are managed in line with the "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (KCSIE) guidance, with a focus on maintaining a thorough, impartial, and legally compliant investigation process.

Low-Level Concerns

- We advise schools on handling allegations that fall under low-level concerns, ensuring that these are dealt with appropriately and in a timely manner. Our guidance helps schools implement effective systems for managing such concerns while safeguarding students and maintaining a safe working environment for staff.

Referrals

- We assist schools in understanding and meeting their reporting obligations, including the process for referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Our support ensures schools comply with legal and regulatory requirements to safeguard both students and staff, promoting a safe and secure environment for everyone.

Workforce Change and Restructures

Model Job Descriptions

- Offering model job descriptions for a variety of school roles, providing clarity during restructuring and ensuring consistency across the school's workforce.

Redundancy & Severance Estimates

- Supporting schools in estimating redundancy severance packages and liaising with Southwark Pensions to provide accurate pension estimates for staff involved in pension schemes.

TUPE Transfers

- Providing expert HR advice on the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE), assisting schools with the legalities of transferring staff in and out of the school.

Restructure Support

- Providing strategic support for organisational changes, including redundancy processes, restructures, and TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations) transfers.
- Ensuring change management processes are managed sensitively, fairly, and in line with legal requirements, minimising disruption while protecting the interests of staff and the school.

Terms and Conditions

Headteacher Pay Range Advice

- Advising Governing Boards on setting the Headteacher's pay range in line with the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document, ensuring fairness and alignment with statutory guidelines.

Annual Pay Updates

- Providing annual updates on school teachers' pay and conditions, including a revised pay policy and recommended pay scales, subject to consultation with teaching trade unions to ensure fairness and transparency.
- Providing annual updates on support staff pay and conditions.

Recruitment

Senior Leader Appointments

- Providing expert advice on recruiting senior leaders, working closely with the School Improvement Partner to ensure that leadership appointments align with the school's strategic vision and goals.

Pre-Employment Checks

- Offering guidance on pre-employment checks, including right-to-work verification, and providing assistance with any complex queries that may arise during the recruitment process.

School Business Managers' Website

Access to Resources & Updates

- We provide exclusive access to the SBM website, offering a wealth of resources, tools, and up-to-date news to help school business managers stay informed on the latest developments in education and HR.
- We facilitate the arrangement of SBM inductions to ensure a smooth onboarding process for new SBMs, and we also organise the SBM network, creating opportunities for professional development, networking, and knowledge sharing.
- We represent the group's interests in external meetings.

COST OF SLA

Core Service	For a fixed annual fee, our Core HR Service includes the following: ▪ Unlimited advisory service all year round (excluding weekends and bank holidays) with flexibility to work outside the core hours of 8-5. ▪ On-site support during school hours with flexibility to work outside of school hours all year round (excluding weekends and bank holidays). ▪ Full access to the Schools' HR website	£118 per employee, based on the number of open and closed contracts from the November 2024 School Workforce Census.
For those schools buying into the Core Service, they also receive a subsidised rate on our other services.		

Additional Services we offer

HR Consultancy

- We provide an HR Consultancy service for schools, where either the work is not covered under the SLA or where the school would like to commission us for a bespoke piece of work.
- This is at the rate of: £700 per day.
- We will charge for a minimum of ½ day's work (up to 3 ½ hours) where this is less.

Recruitment

Schools can request for their job vacancies to be advertised by the Schools' HR team. We will advertise your vacancies on various websites including the Schools' HR website, the Guardian and the DfE. We offer a subsidised rate if you post more than one advert per month, as per the table below.

Cost per Advert	Schools buying into the Core HR Service	Schools not buying into the Core HR Service
One single advert	£153	£191
Package of two adverts	£280	£344
Package of three adverts	£407	£508
Package of four adverts	£444	£666
Package of five adverts	£555	£835

Safer Recruitment Training

We deliver training accredited through the Safer Recruitment Consortium to enable you to meet your obligations under 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' to have at least one member of the recruitment panel who is safer recruitment trained. The accreditation lasts for three years, after which you will need to complete a refresher course.

This interactive course provides you with an understanding of the importance of safer recruitment practice and implementing this in your setting. You will also have opportunities to discuss and share good practice with other delegates on the day.

	Refresher training (This is delivered over ½ day virtually)	Full day training – in person (This is delivered on 1 day)
Schools buying into the core service	£64	£159
Schools not buying into the core service	£84	£211

Learning and Development

We develop and deliver HR training sessions on several different topics relevant to school leaders and managers, including governors:

- Workshops on managing employee relations and restructures
- Training to equip school leaders, managers and governors with the skills and knowledge to manage a range of HR issues
- Deliver regular briefings for governors, school leaders and other school staff during the year
- Bespoke training as requested by individual schools

We will deliver sessions both in person and virtually, to suit your school's needs.

	Type of training delivery	Schools buying into the Core HR Service	Schools not buying into the Core HR Service
Up to ½ day training (3 ½ hours)	Virtual	£64	£84
	In person	£84	£106
Up to 1 day training	Virtual	£122	£159
	In person	£169	£211

We will work with each school on identifying your learning needs and put in place a HR training plan to help with understanding HR policies and procedures and how they should be applied.

For bespoke training: £700 for a training session for up to 8 people – this includes the design and preparation for the training as well as up to ½ day (3 ½ hours) training session. If a follow up session is required, we will charge £700 if further design is required, or £350 for just the training.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

We are required to charge an administration fee for the DBS check, and this is factored into the total charge below.

	Schools buying into the Core HR Service	Schools not buying into the Core HR Service
DBS check per employee – online application	£54	£57
DBS check per employee – paper application	£62	£67
Volunteers – check per employee	£5	£10
Barred list check	£5	£10

Employment Tribunal Advice and Support

We will advise the school on the legal process, including liaising with ACAS / legal representatives. Where Schools HR provides expert advice and input during the employment tribunal process, this falls outside the scope of the service level agreement and the school will be charged a consultancy rate, based on the number of days worked.

HR Audits

To meet our obligations towards maintained schools, we will carry out a basic HR Audit to assess whether the school meets its employment responsibilities. We will also carry this out for other types of schools that buy into the core service, as part of our service offer. We prioritise schools buying into the core service.

In addition, we also offer a more in-depth HR Audit, based on the ACAS Model Workplace. This takes place over two days.

	Basic audit	In-depth audit
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	<i>This includes the prep, up to half a day audit and any follow up work.</i>	<i>This includes the prep, audit carried out over two days and follow up work.</i>
Schools buying into the core service	Free	£1,058
Schools not buying into the core service	£741	£1,269

Schools in Difficulty

We will carry out a HR Audit for schools in difficulty, e.g. where a school's Ofsted rating changes and the school is required to put an action plan in place to address any issues

We will work closely with colleagues, including School Improvement, to support you to address your staffing issues, enabling you to focus on school improvement.

This is in addition to our core service, any additional work carried out as part of this will be costed separately.

Job Evaluations

Southwark Schools' HR are trained job evaluators in the Hay Job Evaluation Scheme. Some members of our team have experience working with different job evaluation schemes, including the GLPC Scheme. We can also advise you on carrying out a market based evaluation.

We will evaluate your jobs to ensure the role is assessed as objectively as possible so the appropriate pay grade can be applied. This helps minimise possible equal pay claims.

This can be purchased on a needs basis.

	Schools buying into the Core HR Service	Schools not buying into the Core HR Service
Cost per job evaluation	£69	£137
Package of two	£111	£222
Package of three	£169	£333
Package of four	£222	£444
Package of five	£280	£555

NOTE: where a school requires more than five jobs to be evaluated, please contact us for more information on pricing.

HR Administration

	Charge
HR Administration	£58 per hour

New School Business Manager Induction / One to One Coaching

We will provide targeted one to one support and coaching to support School Business Managers.

This can be purchased on a need's basis for £700 per day.

Mediation

If you are experiencing a conflict in your school, you may wish to consider mediation to best resolve it. We have trained TCM Accredited Mediators within our team who can provide a mediation service. We will not normally allocate your designated Schools HR Business Partner as the mediator or if they are advising you already on an HR matter which has led to the need for mediation.

HOW WE WILL ENGAGE WITH YOU

- We are available all year round (excluding weekends and bank holidays) with flexibility to work outside the core hours of 8-5.
- You will have a designated HR Business Partner. Where your designated HR Business Partner is unavailable, you will be able to contact anyone in the team to help you.
- You can contact the team by telephone or email, or we can arrange a virtual or in person meeting.
- We will endeavour to respond to all queries within 2 working days, if not sooner.
- We will arrange one annual visit.
- We will attend to advise in formal HR meetings.
- We will keep the Schools' HR website updated and will send you regular updates.

FEEDBACK

We are always striving to provide an excellent service to our schools and so we welcome your feedback. We will take on board your views and suggestions about how we can improve, as well as what you value about our service. We will carry out a customer satisfaction survey on a yearly basis.

In the event you have any feedback with any aspect of the service, please liaise with the HR Business Partner in the first instance. If this is not possible or, if after discussion the matter is not resolved, please refer this on to the Head of Schools' HR. If you continue to be dissatisfied, you can refer the matter to the Assistant Director of Southwark Education, Learning and Achievement.

ENDING YOUR CONTRACT

We hope you continue to make us your preferred HR supplier. Automatic Renewal will apply to schools who bought into the SLA for the previous year on 1st April 2026 unless provided notice by **31st January 2027**. If for any reason you decide you no longer wish to continue with the service beyond the end of the year, please contact us to discuss your reasons.

FAIR USAGE POLICY

This policy ensures fair and efficient access to our HR services while preventing misuse or excessive demand. We reserve the right to monitor HR service usage, and users who exceed fair usage limits may be subject to additional charges.

DATA PROTECTION

For the purposes of Data Protection Legislation, you are the data controller, and we may act as a data processor of Relevant Personal Data when providing HR advice. While processing Relevant Personal Data in connection with our services, we will comply with both your data protection policy and applicable Data Protection Legislation. To ensure compliance, please provide us with your data protection policy and privacy notice.